

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 327

Expressing the sense of the Senate on United States efforts to encourage the governments of foreign countries to investigate and prosecute crimes committed in those countries in the name of family honor and to provide relief for victims of those crimes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 22, 2000

Mr. REID submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate on United States efforts to encourage the governments of foreign countries to investigate and prosecute crimes committed in those countries in the name of family honor and to provide relief for victims of those crimes.

Whereas thousands of women around the world are killed and maimed each year in the name of family “honor”;

Whereas the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 56th Session, January 2000, working with the Special Rapporteurs on violence against women and extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, received reports of so-called “honor killings” from numerous countries, including Bangladesh, Jordan, India, Pakistan, Ecuador, Uganda, and Morocco, and noted that such killings take

many forms, such as flogging, forced suicide, stoning, beheading, acid-throwing, and burning;

Whereas, according to the 1999 report of the Department of State on human rights, so-called “crimes of honor” in Bangladesh include acid-throwing and whipping of women accused of moral indiscretion;

Whereas authorities in Bangladesh expect as many as 200 honor killings in that country in 2000;

Whereas thousands of Pakistani women, including young girls, are stabbed, burned, or maimed every year by husbands, fathers, and brothers who accuse them of dishonoring their family by being unfaithful, seeking a divorce, or refusing an arranged marriage;

Whereas Jordan, which had 20 reported honor killings in 1998, still has laws reducing the penalty for or exempting perpetrators of honor crimes, and the Jordanian parliament has twice failed to repeal those laws;

Whereas the King of Jordan has taken the commendable action of establishing Jordan’s Royal Commission on Human Rights, chaired by the Queen of Jordan, primarily to address obstacles, including the persistence of honor crimes, that prevent women and children from exercising their basic human rights;

Whereas more than 5,000 dowry deaths occur every year in India, according to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), which reported in 1997 that a dozen women die each day in kitchen fires, disguised as accidents, because their husbands’ families are dissatisfied over the size of the women’s dowries;

Whereas women accused of adultery in Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, and a host of other

countries are subject to a maximum penalty of death by stoning;

Whereas, even though honor killings may be outlawed, law enforcement and judicial systems often fail properly to investigate, arrest, and prosecute offenders, and laws frequently permit such reductions in sentences or exemptions from prosecution to those who kill in the name of honor that the results are typically token punishments, impunity, and continued violence against women; and

Whereas the right to life is the most fundamental of all rights and must be guaranteed to every individual without discrimination, and the perpetuation of honor killings and dowry deaths is a deliberate violation of women's human rights that should be universally condemned: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) the President, through the United States
3 Agency for International Development, should work
4 with law enforcement and judicial agencies of foreign
5 governments to encourage the adoption of legal sys-
6 tem reforms that provide for the effective investiga-
7 tion and prosecution of crimes known as “honor
8 crimes”;

9 (2) the President, through the United States
10 Agency for International Development, should make
11 available to local organizations in foreign countries
12 sufficient resources to provide refuge and rehabilita-

1 tion for women who are victims of honor crimes and
2 to sustain their children;

3 (3) the Secretary of State, when preparing an-
4 nual country reports on human rights practices,
5 should include information relating to the incidence
6 of honor violence in foreign countries, the steps
7 taken by foreign governments to address the prob-
8 lem of honor violence, and all relevant actions taken
9 by the United States, whether through diplomacy or
10 foreign assistance programs, to reduce the incidence
11 of honor violence and increase investigations and
12 prosecutions of such crimes;

13 (4) the President should—

14 (A) communicate to the United Nations
15 the concern over the high rate of honor-related
16 violence toward women in foreign countries
17 worldwide; and

18 (B) request that the appropriate United
19 Nations bodies, in consultation with relevant
20 nongovernmental organizations, propose actions
21 to be taken to encourage those countries to
22 demonstrate strong efforts to end such violence;
23 and

24 (5) the President and the Secretary of State
25 should, through direct communication with leaders

1 of countries where honor killings, dowry deaths, and
2 related practices are endemic—

3 (A) convey the most serious concerns of
4 the United States about these gross violations
5 of human rights; and

6 (B) urge the leaders of those countries to
7 investigate and prosecute as murders all such
8 acts with a view to punishing the perpetrators
9 of those acts to the maximum extent provided
10 under law for other murders in those countries.

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